

Humanity can be described as a work in progress. I think my life is a work in progress—I have so much more to fulfill, so much more to achieve. However, in the process of working towards my goals, I do feel like giving up sometimes. That's when life pummels me with sour lemons, and mocks at me when I get hit. Sometimes, the light at the end of the tunnel doesn't seem as bright as it used to be. That is when I really need a virtue called perseverance. I believe perseverance is the strength that triumphs over all adversity.

I tend to ask myself, "What does it really mean to carry on, to persevere?" To me, it means to push on despite how many times I fall, despite the light at the end of the tunnel being so far away, so dim. I want to know what it is like to be strong for once.

In my fourteen years of life, I have encountered countless waves of adversity that came in many forms. I have faced tumultuous friendships, made choices that determined my future and battled with increasing stress levels. When I was twelve, I sat for a test which would grant me a place in a secondary school of my choice. I remember waiting really anxiously for the results as I really wanted to get into this school.

Every single day was full of doubt. Even my classmates whom I trusted before gave me skeptical looks. They told me to just forget it and concentrate on what was ahead. I had to battle with constant thoughts of: 'What if they *are* right?' I even felt sorry for myself for overestimating my abilities. The voices in my head were all unanimous: QUIT WAITING. My biggest hurdles then were doubt, self-pity and discouragement. Still, I tried to suppress the voices that only I could hear, and continued to persevere through this time of doubt.

At that point, I started losing hope. Then, I was reminded of this verse in the Bible which pulled me back to my senses.

"Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9

As I look back, I wonder, what would the outcome be, had I not persevered? What if I just gave up the wait? For one thing, I would be a much more miserable student as opposed to the contented, happy student who I am now.

I think it is human nature for some of us to downplay the importance of perseverance, and find the easiest way to get out of difficulties, in more biblical terms, the broader path. I used to be fascinated by how millipedes protect themselves from danger. There was a time when I was playing with one, and the moment I touched it, it coiled up and stayed motionless for a few minutes before uncurling itself and carrying on its course. Sometimes, I wish I can do that—to curl up and wait for danger to pass before carrying on. Unfortunately, I don't think life gives me a chance to do that. I might escape from reality once or twice, but not always.

I believe that the narrow path is the way to success. And for me to walk on the narrow path, I certainly need to persevere. I believe that, when life throws me lemons, I don't have to fumble, I don't have to get hit, but I will choose to make lemon juice out of them, to keep calm and carry on.

Being a work in progress makes me feel as though I have a higher calling, something better in store, or something that has yet to be achieved. Choosing the narrow path to achieve my goals is not going to be easy, but with perseverance alongside me, I might become a finished work in the end!